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NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
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SERBIA AND RUSSIA:
U.S. APPEASEMENT AND THE RESURRECTION OF FASCISM

LONGER ESSAY

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"...we have direct strategic concerns. The continuing destruction of a new UN member state challenges the principle that internationally recognized borders should not be altered by force...Bold tyrants and fearful minorities are watching to see whether 'ethnic cleansing' is a policy the world will tolerate. If we hope to promote the spread of freedom or if we hope to encourage the emergence of peaceful multiethnic democracies, our answer must be a resounding no." -- Secretary Christopher on Bosnia, February 10, 1993

"...the relationship between the United States and Russia has entered a new stage of mature strategic partnership based on equality, mutual advantage, and recognition of each other's national interests." -- U.S.-Russian Summit Declaration, Moscow, January 14, 1994

"'What is taking place between Washington and Moscow is a sophisticated, diplomatically sanctioned carve-up of Bosnia,' said a senior UN official." -- Financial Times, March 17, 1994

"There's no question that Russia and the Russian military was very instrumental in stabilizing Mr. Shevardnadze's position in Georgia." -- President Clinton, Moscow, January 14, 1994

"Ukraine now stands on the brink of a Bosnia-type cataclysm." -- Janusz Bugayski, Washington Times, March 15, 1994

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

A specter is haunting Europe. It is the specter of that virulent nationalism whose ultimate form is fascism -- national socialism, aggression, genocide.

In West Europe, fascism is an unsettling undercurrent, manifested in a surge of xenophobia, racism, and right-wing parties. It must compete for influence in established democratic political cultures. It can be defeated by political means, if

democratic forces rally to defend their principles and values .

In East Europe, democratic forces thin out and societies are more vulnerable to fascism. In most of East Europe, fascism can still be defeated by political means.

In South East Europe, however, fascism has already ruled and ravaged for three years in Serbia and the lands it has seized and purged in Croatia and Bosnia. Serb fascism is the fully developed form. It does not aim to conquer Europe. But it does aim to redefine the post-Cold War order in Europe to one that accepts aggression and genocide. It is succeeding. Serb fascism can only be defeated militarily.

Democratic forces thin out still more further east, in the former Soviet Union. And fascism reaches for power in Russia today. Russian fascism is still in proto-fascist form. Its consolidation would gravely threaten U.S. national security. This outcome has already become more likely than a democratic Russia -- even as Serb fascism has demonstrated that the West, including the United States, will not defend its principles, values, interests, and security. Russian fascism may still be defeatable by political means -- if U.S. policy changes course now.

My thesis is that there is a reinforcing causal nexus between Serb fascism, U.S. appeasement, and Russian fascism. These three phenomena are linked by three vicious circles, and form one over-arching vicious circle in the pattern illustrated below:

SERB FASCISM

RUSSIAN FASCISM

U.S. APPEASEMENT

In focusing on this pattern, I do not imply that these phenomena do not have separate, internal causes. They do. But I do argue that Serb fascism, U.S. appeasement, and Russian fascism are mutually reinforcing, in a way that helps explain the very rapid and unexpected darkening of the world zeitgeist since the end of the Cold War.

I develop my thesis in three steps. First, I compare Serbia and Russia to highlight reasons to expect parallel and mutually reinforcing developments toward fascism in the two cases.

Second, I outline U.S. appeasement of Serb and Russian fascism and proto-fascism in terms of the practice and pathology of U.S. policy. Third, I address the transmission belts between Serb fascism, U.S. appeasement, and Russian fascism.

I conclude that the vicious circle between Serb fascism, U.S. appeasement, and Russian fascism is increasingly hard to escape. It puts the transatlantic community in a pre-war, rather than post-war, situation.

SERBIA AND RUSSIA

The rule of fascism in Serbia and its rise toward power in Russia underscore that the fall of communism was not enough for a "Europe whole and free." It was also necessary that Serbia and Russia, the 'core nations' within the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, accept the breakup of their respective Balkan and Eurasian supranational states. Neither Serbia nor Russia have ever been normal European states. Whether they would become ones after the fall of communism was more an open question than for other old and new states in Eastern Europe. Many of the reasons behind Serbia's "no" are equally present in Russia.

The Serbia/Yugoslavia and Russia/Soviet Union structures were unique in East Europe, and not just because they were the only multinational federations of their kind. They were also unique and alike in the ways outlined below.

Both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were created by wartime revolutions that were indigenous rather than imposed, and that projected a supranational sense of identity based on communism. As a result, both Serbia and Russia had senses of national and state identity which were ill-defined between Serb and Yugoslav and Russian and Soviet.

Both Serbia and Russia treated their federations as lands they had the right to control. At the same time, both nourished grievances. The Serb grievance was that for Tito, a strong Yugoslavia required a weak Serbia, that more advanced Slovenia and Croatia exploited Serbia, and that while all Yugoslav

republics except Slovenia were nationally mixed, only Serbia was internally divided by autonomy for Kosovo and Vojvodina. The Russian grievance was similar: the sense of having paid the 'civilizer's burden' to develop the non-Russian republics, of being exploited by the Balts, and of having less 'national' stature than the other republics.

Both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were multinational states whose non-Serb and non-Russian republics enjoyed the formal right of secession -- but were home to Serb and Russian diaspora's that would be 'separated' by a breakup. Both Serbia and Russia, even as they set out to reverse that separation in the aftermath of breakup, also face separatist pressure from their own large non-Serb and non-Russian populations.

There are nuances. There is no equivalent in Russia to Serb memories of Ustashe Croat genocide against Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia during World War Two, nor to the Serb perception that Albanians usurp 'sacred' Serb lands in Kosovo. These factors were massively exploited by Serb dictator Milosevic in his mobilization of Serbs for a fascist Greater Serbia. The absence of equivalent factors in Russia suggests a weaker basis for fascism there. However, there is more grass-roots 'Great Russian' sentiment among the Russian diaspora, and less integration with its new state hosts, than there were for the Serb diaspora. Russians have a much longer and deeper history of hegemony over other nations than do Serbs. These factors suggest more pressure for virulent nationalism from below (as opposed to

mobilized from above) in the Russian case.¹

Both Serbia and Russia were the largest Orthodox nations in their respective multinational/multireligious entities, and show susceptibility to racist and religious intolerance of Muslims.

Both Serbs and Russians dominated the officer corps of the Yugoslav and Soviet militaries, whose futures were threatened by Yugoslav and Soviet disintegration, but who now play key roles in the Serb and Russian regimes. An important distinction is the absence (thus far) of nuclear weapons in the former Yugoslavia and their presence in several former Soviet republics. The latter can be viewed as a deterrent to aggression by Russia against, say, Ukraine, or as an added local and global danger if such aggression occurs. What is clear is the high U.S. stake in seeing those nuclear arsenals not only reduced in size, but above all controlled by peaceful, democratic states.

Finally, and above all, for both Serbia and Russia there was an inescapable connection between the internal and external courses they would chart in the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union: *Serbia and Russia could be empires or democracies, but they could not be both.* This is understood by the Serb and Russian political elites and by Western experts on East European nationalities issues, if not by U.S. policy makers.²

The similarities outlined above were initially obscured by the different circumstances under which Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union broke up. U.S. policy in 1990-1991 did see some similarity between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, insofar as the U.S.

sought to avert or slow the breakup of Yugoslavia to avoid precipitating a breakup of the Soviet Union. Secretary Baker alluded to the similarity with his late 1991 warning that the Soviet Union could become a "Yugoslavia with nukes." The Bush Administration nevertheless opted to let the Yugoslav model proceed unchecked. Since then, the American foreign policy establishment has given the Serbia-Russia parallel little thought.

Serb fascism preceded, precipitated, and then exploited the breakup of Yugoslavia. Serbia under Milosevic never intended to accept the end of hegemony. On the contrary. Milosevic first destroyed Yugoslavia between 1987-1991 precisely because its Titoist structures and Westernizing trends were obstacles and threats to his power; then in 1991-1994 began to carve out a Greater Serbia fit for dictatorial rule and capable, if consolidated, of dominating the Balkans.

The ideology of Milosevic's Greater Serbia is an atavistic, anti-Western variant of Serb nationalism. It reflects legitimate Serb interests no more than Nazism reflected German interests. Before 1990, this ideology dominated the mind-sets of a minority of Serbs and colored the attitudes of most Serbs. In the run-up to and course of war, Milosevic has made it dominant in Serb political discourse. It is summed up in the concept that all Serbs must live in one state, and that state is for Serbs only.

Unlike communism, this concept can have no supranational attraction for any non-Serb. *Its implementation can only be*

initiated by aggression and completed by genocide. This is a crucial reason why the post-communist drive for a Greater Serbia was proto-fascist from the start. The same applies to any drive for a Greater Russia.

The core forces for Serb fascism were mobilized from elements of the intellectual elite, the Serb officer corps and internal security forces, the 'apparat' of the socialist economy, urban 'lumpen-proletariat' strata, and rural primitives. Its strategy and tactics have much in common with Nazism, including aggression masked as 'protecting ethnic brethren' and genocide to arrive at 'final solutions.' The biggest differences with Nazism are that Serbia is small and in economic collapse, that regime-connected 'mafia' control most of what economic activity exists, and that senior Serb leaders do not call themselves fascists, but simply patriots. This is an anachronistic fascism that has nothing to offer except blood and land. It is ready to wage genocide, but not to reveal its true name.

Similar ideologies, forces, and circumstances are now on hand in Russia. Serb fascism has blazed their trail.

The Russian case was different at the outset. In 1991, Gorbachev sought to preserve and reform the Soviet Union. Progressives defeated the reactionary coup against Gorbachev, and accepted the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Russia under Yeltsin set out to give up empire and forge a peaceful, democratic Russia -- although this simplification must be

qualified: Russia was taken by surprise by the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russians differed on whether this was in fact acceptable, and Yeltsin himself was ambivalent from the start.³

Through April 1994 there remain important differences between Serbia and Russia. In the latter, there have been free elections. There are pluralist media. The national-communists and the overt fascists remain formally in opposition. Russia still lacks a Fuhrer.

However, by April 1994 there is little momentum left in the hopeful Russian course charted in 1991. Despite reassurances from the Executive Branch, the increasingly common assessment in the U.S. Congress and media and among independent analysts is that (1) momentum in Russia has shifted to communist-nationalists who want Russia on a reactionary, aggressive course, (2) those reformers who are still in power are increasingly behaving like the communist-nationalists, and (3) the latter already have extensive control over Russia's domestic and foreign policies. The trend toward an ideology based on the concept that all ethnic Russians must live in one state -- or at least under the military protection of a Russian state -- is clear as well.

Russia now looks like Serbia did before its assault on Croatia in 1991, in terms of the dominant mood of the Russian political class, the priority it gives to the Russian diaspora and to Russian hegemony over the lands of the former Soviet Union, and the willingness of Moscow to use force to pursue these causes.⁴

Moscow's relations with Serbia have also evolved. In 1991 Russia paid little attention to the Balkans, and Milosevic's support for the 1991 Moscow coup made him Yeltsin's enemy. In May 1992, Russia was a cooperative player in Western political and economic measures against Serb aggression in Bosnia. In April 1994, in the absence of any countervailing pressure from the West, Russia behaves like a political ally and military protector of fascist Serbia.

U.S. APPEASEMENT OF SERBIA AND RUSSIA

THE PRACTICE: 'A GREATER SERBIA IS A STABLE BALKANS'

Just as there are no avowed fascists at the helm in Belgrade, there are no avowed appeasers in charge in Washington. Yet, since 1990, U.S. policy in the Balkans has had two essential constants: (1) aversion to military confrontation of Serb aggression, whether with U.S. forces, military aid to Serbia's victims, or even allowing the latter to exercise their right of self-defense; and (2) the search for conciliation by yielding, and pressing the victims to yield, to Serb belligerence, at the expense of justice and other principles.

This is appeasement -- although by 1994, and insofar as appeasement is a strategy to avert rather than reward war, it might better be called capitulation. It has been applied in the following ways to Milosevic's march toward a Greater Serbia.

In 1990-1991, Milosevic used the threat of force and an initial limited use of force (massive repression in Kosovo, a

Serb "uprising" -- organized from Belgrade -- in the Knin area of Croatia, and Yugoslav Army seizure of local weapons stocks in non-Serb republics) to press the non-Serb republics either to accept a Milosevic dictatorship in a Serb-dominated anti-Western Yugoslavia, or to cede any lands claimed by Serbia as a condition for independence. The U.S. government assessment was that Milosevic was making Yugoslavia unlivable for the non-Serb republics, usurping central Yugoslav institutions, fomenting nationalist conflict, and irreconcilably opposed to any fair compromise between Serbia and the other republics. Nonetheless, U.S. policy supported the unity of Yugoslavia and opposed independence for non-Serb republics absent Milosevic's consent.

In June 1991-April 1992, Milosevic waged war against Croatia with the minimum objective of seizing Serb-majority areas for a Greater Serbia, and a maximum objective of seizing much of the Adriatic coast and eastern Croatia as well. Such was the U.S. government assessment, as enunciated by Secretary Baker to the UN in September 1991. Nonetheless, U.S. policy continued to deny recognition of Croatian independence absent Milosevic's consent, denied Croatia access to weapons, insisted that Croatia negotiate with rather than resist Milosevic, supported the "Vance Plan" for a UN cease-fire which left Serbia in control of some 25 percent of Croatia, and took no action to punish Serbia for its aggression and extensive war crimes in Croatia.

From April 1992 to the present, Milosevic has waged genocidal war against Bosnia (while consolidating his gains

behind UN protection in Croatia), with the objective of seizing as much of Bosnia as possible, and exterminating enough Bosnian Moslems and Croats (over 200,000 thus far) to make that seizure irreversible. U.S. government assessments have varied widely, often within hours. The war in Bosnia was either a blatant case of Serb aggression that was "tantamount to" genocide -- or a spontaneous outburst of ancient ethnic feuds in a civil war for which all sides were to blame. The latter 'big lie' has been the dominant U.S. line since late spring 1993. U.S. policy supported recognition and UN membership for Bosnia in April 1992, and led the way on UN economic sanctions to punish Serb aggression in May 1992. However, U.S. policy continued to oppose Bosnian access to weapons (until May 1993, when U.S. policy shifted to occasional rhetorical support for lifting the UN arms embargo from Bosnia), and to insist that Bosnia 'compromise' with Serbia.

To the extent that U.S. policy has threatened or used force in Bosnia, its threats have targeted "all parties" and its use of force has been "neutral." Since August 1993 the threat and use of U.S. force has also been linked to (1) U.S. pressure on the Bosnian government to accept the formal partition of Bosnia, and (2) the notion of lifting UN economic sanctions from Serbia-Montenegro after such a partition. By mid-April 1994, President Clinton was stressing, after feeble NATO airstrikes around Gorazde, that the U.S. "had no interest in using NATO airpower to affect the outcome of the war," but only to comply with UN requests and encourage further "negotiation." In short, UN

sanctions initially imposed to reverse aggression will be lifted when the results of aggression have been ratified. U.S./NATO military power is applied not to reverse aggression, but to advance "negotiations" to ratify aggression.

THE PRACTICE: 'A GREATER RUSSIA IS A STABLE EURASIA'

U.S. policy appeases Russian aggressivity in four areas: Russia's relations with its neighbors, Russia's specific relations with Ukraine, Russia's relations with Eastern Europe, and Russia's specific role on Bosnia.

As of April 1994, Russia has used force to violate the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tajikistan, Georgia, and Moldova. It has rendered active support to Armenian use of force against Azerbaijan and to internal insurgency within Azerbaijan. It has imposed conditions on its military withdrawal from Latvia and Estonia that violate the UN Charter and Helsinki Final Act. Russian military activities in Ukraine are increasingly assertive and inconsistent with the sovereignty of Ukraine.

U.S. policy has not opposed these applications of Russian force. On January 25, 1994, Deputy Secretary Talbott did tell

Congress that "Russian conduct in several of the neighboring states, particularly the Transcaucasus, has been troublesome, and has occasioned some blunt exchanges in our diplomatic exchanges with Moscow." The U.S. side of these "blunt exchanges" cannot

have been forceful. U.S. Ambassador to Russia Pickering has denied any danger of Russian imperialism, in a February 10 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations. President Clinton has signalled U.S. acquiescence to Russian military interventions, in his public remarks in Moscow on January 10. Here, the President: (1) tacitly accepted the notion that common ethnicity was a valid grounds for external military action; (2) praised the Russian military for "stabilizing" Georgia, while ignoring its initial destabilization of Georgia and the quid pro quo demanded by Russia for 'restabilization', i.e., Georgia joining the Moscow-dominated Commonwealth of Independent States; and (3) legitimized future Russian military interventions against neighboring states by predicting they would occur and likening them in advance to past U.S. actions in Panama and Grenada.⁵

With regard to Ukraine, and under the overall U.S. 'Russia First' policy, the U.S. shares Russia's preference for a denuclearized Ukraine. There are telling non-proliferation arguments for such a stance, but there are also telling arguments that a nuclear Ukraine may be a more stable option.⁶ In practice, U.S. policy favors Russia's interest in a non-nuclear Ukraine over Ukraine's interest in guarantees against Russian aggression. In the talks for the January 1994 U.S./Russian/Ukrainian statement on removing nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Ukraine pressed for strong assurance that the Ukraine/Russia border was inviolable and permanent. Russia wanted no reference to the matter. The U.S. supported a compromise that gives

Ukraine only a weak assurance: a Russian promise to observe CSCE principles. This requires that any change to the Russia/Ukraine border be by "mutual consent."⁷ The elasticity of this requirement in 1994 is being demonstrated in the U.S.-led talks on the forced partition of Bosnia.

With regard to East Europe, and in response to Russian demands, U.S. policy in late 1993 rejected East European states' bid for a mechanism and timetable for NATO membership, and offered instead to all states in East Europe and the former Soviet Union the vague 'Partnership For Peace.' To Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest, the U.S. implied that 'Partnership for Peace' meant their entry into NATO was a question of when, not if. To Moscow, the U.S. implied that NATO membership for East European states had been indefinitely postponed.

With regard to Bosnia, U.S. policy has (1) invited Russia into the UN/EU 'mediation' process in early 1993, thus exposing ambivalent Russian leaders to direct Serb pressures and manipulation; (2) given Russia heavy influence over Western strategy since the May 1993 "Action Program," including the emphasis on 'neutrality' and the maintenance of the UN arms embargo on Bosnia; (3) welcomed the February 1994 Russian troop deployment to Sarajevo as UN peacekeepers -- which was imposed on the Bosnian government and the UN, and serves as a trip-wire against NATO airstrikes Sarajevo and against any Bosnian government attempt to break the siege of Sarajevo by force; and (4) allowed Russia to restrict the scale and rules of engagement

for the U.S./NATO response to the Serb assault on Gorazde.

THE PATHOLOGY: APPEASEMENT AS A 'STEALTH STRATEGY'

The heart of appeasement, today as in the 1930's, is (1) the lack of moral and strategic vision, leadership, backbone, and empathy for human suffering; and (2) the tendency of a stronger power to make concessions to a weaker but aggressive power, who thereby gains in strength and becomes a deadly threat. These traits are embarrassing and hard to admit for the U.S. foreign policy establishment and particularly U.S. policy makers. But they are fundamental.

The pathology of U.S. appeasement in the 1990's includes the following symptoms.

(1) **Projection**, or the tendency to ascribe to others feelings, thoughts or attitudes present in oneself. U.S. leaders assume that because they want to see a peaceful, integrated Europe, this vision is also attractive to Serb and Russian hardliners, and can be used as leverage. A related fallacy is economic determinism, or the notion -- powerfully disproved by 20th century nationalism -- that economics determine political outcomes. A third is the sense that because American leaders are tired of the burdens of the Cold War, or tired of the killing in the Balkans, so too are hardline Serb and Russian leaders.

Those who project their own sense of past-Cold War fatigue to others should ask themselves: why it is that U.S. domestic problems must constrain an assertive U.S. foreign policy, while

far graver domestic problems are no obstacle to far more assertive Serb and Russian foreign policies?

Fallacies of projection underlie the stubborn U.S. expectation that the 'carrot and stick' of integration with Europe will influence men like Milosevic. In 1990-91, U.S. policy hoped Yugoslav Prime Minister Markovic's successful but short-lived economic reform would neutralize Milosevic and ensure unity and democracy for Yugoslavia. In early 1992, U.S. policy hoped that Milosevic, appeased in Croatia but threatened with pariah status should he attack Bosnia, would desist from further aggression. In late 1992, U.S. policy hoped that a Serb emigre businessman from California, Milan Panic, would wrest control of Serbia from Milosevic by promising peace and capitalism. Now, U.S. policy hopes that giving Milosevic much of Bosnia and then lifting economic sanctions will deter him from further aggression there and to the south.

On Russia, U.S. policy projects Clinton campaign slogans ("It's the economy, stupid") onto Russian developments, by reducing the Zhirinovsky phenomenon to an economic protest vote, and defining economics as the decisive factor for overall Russian domestic and foreign behavior over the next few years.⁸

(2) **Denial**, or the refusal to recognize or assimilate alarming information. Denial is as much a willful instrument as an unconscious cause of U.S. appeasement, but the borders between willful and unconscious appear to break down over time. For

Serbia, instances of U.S. denial are legion. The U.S. was reluctant to recognize the pattern of Serb military activity in Croatia in 1990-1991 and in Bosnia in late winter-spring of 1992, or the reality of Serb-run concentration camps in Bosnia in summer 1992. The U.S. remains reluctant to acknowledge Serb genocide in Bosnia in 1992-94, the personal responsibility of Serb leaders, and its human costs (the preferred State Department line is that 'it is impossible to say how many have died').⁹

For Russia, there is a similar pattern of denial: U.S. reluctance to recognize the growing weakness of preferred interlocutors (Gorbachev, Yeltsin), or to draw conclusions about Russian military interventions, the ominous evolution of official Russian national security policy, the projected rise in Russian military spending, and the exhaustion of domestic Russian reform.

(3) **Wishful thinking.** This is a close corollary of projection and denial. For Serbia, U.S. policy has nourished chronic false hope that Milosevic would be toppled by domestic opponents or UN economic sanctions, that he would moderate his objectives when appeased, or that he had reached his territorial aims. In Russia, U.S. policy hoped the parliamentary elections of December 1993 would consolidate both Yeltsin and reform; it now hopes against all evidence that Yeltsin's January summit vow to Clinton to press ahead "full speed" on economic reform has predictive value not just for the economy but for Russia's overall policy course.

(4) **Defeatism.** This has been a strange flip-side to the

projection, denial, and wishful thinking of U.S. policy on Serbia and Russia. U.S. defeatism is applied to their actual or potential victims. U.S. policy has consistently underestimated the will and capacity of Croatia and Bosnia to resist a Greater Serbia, as well as the persistence of Bosnian aspirations for multiethnic democracy. The same defeatism seems now to inform official U.S. perceptions of Ukraine and the degree to which it will resist partition or reabsorption by an imperial Russia.

In the 1980's, U.S. Cold War policy was based on the conviction that history was on the side of freedom and resistance to evil, and that the United States was a key player in achieving victory. Now, U.S. appeasement is based on the rationalization that because the Administration lacks the will to act, the outcome of history in the 1990's must be either unimportant or beyond the influence of the U.S.

The types of policy behavior characteristic of U.S. appeasement of Serbia and Russia include the following:

(a) **equivocation** (Bosnia is a case of genocidal aggression but also mostly a civil war, Russian conduct in the Caucasus is 'troublesome' but also praiseworthy);

(b) **amnesia** (the disappearance of the principled themes in the Clinton Administration's first policy statement on Bosnia in early 1993, or the U.S. obliviousness to the fact that Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev's December 1992 warning to the CSCE of what a dangerous, reactionary Russia would look like if democracy failed has already been more than fulfilled);

- (c) **legitimation of nationalist Serb and Russian propaganda** (that Croatia and now Bosnia are civil wars, or that an eastward expansion of NATO can legitimately be viewed as a hostile act by Russia);
- (d) **redefinition** to suit domestic U.S. political convenience (Bosnia is a strategic interest or merely a humanitarian concern; Russia is a state with which we have a 'mature strategic partnership' or a sometimes partner which can also be an adversary);
- (e) **dishonesty and Orwellian double-speak** (the refusal to call the Serb campaign in Bosnia genocide under the UN Convention, or the assertion that U.S. mediation on Bosnia aims for a 'voluntary, peaceful settlement' as opposed to the capitulation of the Bosnian government to aggression and genocide);
- (f) efforts to establish **moral equivalency** between victims and aggressors;
- (g) **refusal to take sides** between victims and aggressors;
- (h) **empty threats and rhetorical posturing**;
- (i) **efforts to disarm potential and actual victims** (the arms embargoes on Croatia and Bosnia, or the pressure on Ukraine to give up nuclear weapons);
- (j) persistent **emphasis on the risks of U.S. action**, and de-emphasis of the risks of U.S. inaction; and
- (k) **repeated retreats** in practice and then in principle from initial stands and commitments.

Neville Chamberlain was straightforward about his strategy toward Hitler's Germany. U.S. appeasement of Serbia and Russia amounts to a "stealth strategy" vis-a-vis the U.S. public. U.S. Government denial of the realities in Serbia and Russia, and of the realities of U.S. policies, preclude and appear designed to preclude a genuine national debate on the right U.S. response to Serbia and Russia. Despite significant protest from within the American political elite, the Clinton Administration appears set on slipping its appeasement policies by the American public.

TRANSMISSION BELTS: THE VICIOUS CIRCLES

Serb Fascism and U.S. Appeasement

The interaction between Serb fascism and U.S. appeasement has been extensively described over the past three years by the U.S. media, senior foreign policy experts, and Congressional critics of Bush and Clinton Administration policies.¹⁰ To conceive of this interaction as a vicious circle -- a dynamic, escalatory process whose two elements reinforce each other -- helps explain the persistence of failed U.S. policies, and their degradation from ineffective resistance to Serb aggression in 1990-91, to active complicity in Serb aggression and genocide in 1992-94. It also broadens the field of examination to how the interaction between Serb fascism and U.S. appeasement relates to other policy areas.

Even the architects of current U.S. policies accept,

intermittently, that tolerating Serb aggression and "ethnic cleansing" erodes the credibility, authority and power of the U.S. UN, CSCE, and NATO, and encourages further threats to U.S. interests.¹¹ It also stands to reason, unless one posits a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde duality to U.S. foreign policy making, that the habits and techniques developed by U.S. policy makers in appeasing Serbia -- equivocation, evasion, denial, cover-ups, tolerance of the ostensibly intolerable, retreat, the abdication of leadership -- spill over into U.S. policy making in the similar but higher-risk Russian context.

U.S. Appeasement and Russian Fascism

U.S. appeasement reinforces Russian fascism both indirectly, via the demonstration effect and precedents set by U.S. appeasement of Serbia, and directly, via conciliatory U.S. policies framed in the specific context of Russian aggressivity. Russian aggressivity, in turn, reinforces U.S. appeasement, including toward Serb fascism.

Such linkages are exemplified by two arguments commonly heard within the State Department and attributed to the "Talbott Approach" to Russia: (1) that the U.S. must not let a 'marginal' issue like Bosnia interfere with U.S. grand strategy toward Russia; and (2) that the U.S. must not confront Serb aggression because this would inflame Russian hardliners and thereby

undermine Yeltsin. These two arguments beg the question: how is

it, exactly, that capitulating to Serb fascists and appeasing Russian proto-fascists will strengthen Russian democrats?

Serb Fascism and Russian Fascism

The direct dynamic between Serb fascism and Russian fascism has been little studied, despite Western awareness that Serbia has been the hottest foreign policy issue for Russian nationalist-communists, and that Russian policy has grown increasingly protective of Serbia.¹²

Serb fascism strengthens Russian fascism directly by (a) providing a successful ideological, strategic, and tactical model; (b) providing a 'trojan horse' policy issue for Russian nationalist-communists to use against the Yeltsin regime and its initial Westernizing aspirations -- an issue where pan-Slavic and pan-Orthodox rhetoric masks a pan-fascist agenda, and where the nationalist-communists' increasing influence over Russian foreign policy strengthens their influence over Russian domestic policy as well; (c) legitimizing aggression and even genocide ostensibly on behalf of 'threatened' ethnic brethren in neighboring states; (d) providing the possibility of direct organizational, financial, military, and training cooperation between Serb fascists and Russian fascists, whether via Russian volunteers fighting in Bosnia (or indeed, Russian UN peacekeepers in Croatia and Bosnia, notorious for their intimate relations with, for example, Serb paramilitary leader Arkan's death squads), reciprocal visits of political party leaders, or ties established

between Serb fascist leaders in Belgrade, Pale, and Vukovar and Russian parliamentary and executive branch officials.

Russian fascism strengthens Serb fascism through these same channels, and through the political and de facto military support extended by the Russian government to Serbia and its allies in Croatia and Bosnia: Russian opposition to lifting the UN arms embargo from Bosnia, Russian opposition to NATO airstrikes against Serb forces on the ground in Bosnia, and Russian support for Serb objectives in the UN/EU and now U.S./Russian mediation process.

CONCLUSION

My thesis predicts that genocidal Serb aggression will continue in Bosnia and spread to Kosovo and Macedonia, that Russia will continue to grow more aggressive to its neighbors, particularly Ukraine, and more hostile to the West, and that U.S. policy will continue to appease both Serbia and Russia. The history of this century has shown that it is not in the nature of fascism to be contained by appeasement, and that it is not in the nature of appeasement to give way to will and courage until fascism becomes an absolutely clear and present danger to the national survival of the appeaser. Even then, if past is precedent, it takes leaders of the stature of Winston Churchill and FDR to begin effective resistance, and dramatic national mobilization to make that resistance prevail.

That America and Russia can destroy each other with nuclear

weapons may avert the repetition of total war as the culmination of the fascism/appeasement cycle of the 1990's. However, the reinforcing dynamic between fascism and appeasement, in the 1990's as in the 1930's, suggests that some sudden and dramatic shock -- and a national security team neither predisposed to nor conditioned by appeasement -- will be necessary to lift the U.S. out of the vicious circles outlined above.

And yet -- post-Cold-War America is stronger and wiser than Chamberlain's World War I-shaken Britain, or FDR's isolationist society. Fascism is a discredited force. Appeasement is a discredited way of dealing with it. America is not condemned to relive past tragedies. All it needs is leaders who will face up honestly to the challenges we face.

NOTES

1. On the Russian diaspora, see Vera Tolz, "The Burden of the Imperial Legacy," RFE/RL Research Report vol. 2, no. 20, May 14, 1993; Andrew Wilson, "Crimea's Political Cauldron," RFE/RL Research Report vol. 2, no. 45, November 12, 1993; Leon Gudkov, "The Disintegration of the USSR and Russians in the Republics," Journal of Communist Studies, vol. 9, no. 1, March 1993; and William D. Jackson, "Russia After the Crisis: Imperial Temptations: Ethnics Abroad," Orbis, vol. 38, no. 1, Winter 1994.
2. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," Foreign Affairs, volume 73, no. 2, March/April 1994; Paul Goble, "Russia and Its Neighbors," Foreign Policy, number 90, Spring 1993; Paul Goble, "Can We Help Russia Become a Good Neighbor," Democratizatsiya, vol. II, no. 1, 1994; Roman Szporluk, "Statehood and Nation-Building in Post-Soviet Space," draft of an introduction to forthcoming The Influence of National Identity, edited by Roman Szporluk, volume 2 of The International Politics of Eurasia: Newly Independent States Enter the Twenty-first Century, edited by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, N.Y., M.E. Sharpe, 1994; Roman Szporluk, "Conflict in Soviet Domestic and Foreign Policy: Universal Ideology and National Tradition," pp. 275-290 in Behavior, Culture and Conflict in World Politics, edited by William Zimmerman and Harold K. Jacobson, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1993; and Alexei G. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," International Security, vol. 18, no. 2, fall 1993.
3. See Roman Solchanyk, "The Politics of State-Building: Centre-Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine," Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 46, no. 1, 1994.
4. See Fiona Hill and Pamela Jewett, "Back in the USSR - Russia's Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Former Soviet Republics and the Implications for United States Policy Toward Russia," Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, January 1994; Thomas Goltz, "The Hidden Russian Hand," Foreign Policy, no. 92, fall 1993; Pol Kolsto & Andrei Edemsky, "The Dneister Conflict: Between Irredentism and Separatism," Europe-Asia Review, vol. 45, no. 6, 1993; James H. Slagle, "New Russian Military Doctrine: Sign of the Times," Parameters, vol. XXIV, no. 1, spring 1994; Frank Umbach, "The Security of an Independent Ukraine," Jane's Intelligence Review, March 1994; and the following analyses of evolving Russian foreign and military policies, with particular regard to the 'near abroad,' in RFE/RL Research Reports: Jan S. Adams, "Who Will Make Russia's Foreign Policy in 1994?" vol. 3, no. 6, Feb.

11. 1994; Suzanne Crowe, "Russian Parliament Asserts Control over Sevastopol," vol. 2, no. 31, July 30, 1993; Suzanne Crowe, "Processes and Policies," vol 2, no. 20, May 14, 1993; John Lough, "Defining Russia's Relations with Neighboring States, *ibid*; Suzanne Crowe, "Russia Seeks Leadership in Regional Peacekeeping," vol. 2, no. 15, April 9, 1993; Suzanne Crowe, "Russia Adopts A More Active Policy," vol. 2, no. 12, March 19, 1993; Elizabeth Fuller, "Russia's Diplomatic Offensive in the Transcaucasus," vol. 2, no. 39, October 1, 1993; Bess Brown, "Central Asian States Seek Russian Help," vol 2, no. 25, June 18, 1993; and Keith Martin, "Tadzhikistan: Civil War Without End," vol. 2, no. 33, August 20, 1993.

5. For texts of the remarks of Deputy Secretary Talbott, Ambassador Pickering, and President Clinton, see State Department and White House transcripts as well as U.S. Department of State Dispatch, February 21, 1994.

6. See John J. Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," Foreign Affairs, vol. 72, no. 3, summer 1993.

7. Author's conversation with Paul Goble, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment, Washington D.C., February 1994.

8. See Deputy Secretary Talbott's January 25, 1994 testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

9. See Richard Johnson, "The Pin-Stripe Approach to Genocide," National War College Core Course Essay, January 1, 1994.

10. See for example the public statements of Richard Nixon, Zbigniew Brzezinski, George Shultz, Casper Weinberger, Jean Kirkpatrick, Margaret Thatcher, Senators Dole, DeConcini, Biden, and Lugar and Congressmen McCloskey, Hoyer, and Bonior.

11. See for example President Clinton's radio address on the U.S. stakes in Bosnia on February 19, 1994, on the eve of the end of the NATO Sarajevo airstrike ultimatum.

12. See, however, Frank Umbach, "The Consequences of Western Policy Toward the Yugoslav Conflict and Its Impact Upon the Former Soviet Union," European Security, vo. 2, no. 2, summer 1993; Suzanne Crowe, "Russia's Response to the Yugoslav Crisis," RFE/RL Research Report, no. 30, July 24, 1992 and "Reading Moscow's Policies Toward the Rump Yugoslavia," RFE/RL Research Report, no. 44, November 6, 1992; Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and

the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," Survival, vol. 35, no. 1, spring 1993; and Allen Lynch and Reneo Lukic, "Russian Foreign Policy and the Wars in the Former Yugoslavia," RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 41, October 1993.